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C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 000851

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DEPT FOR NEA/ARP (S. STEINGER), DRL (J. DEMARIA)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/31/2016

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [SOCT](#) [PGOV](#) [ELAB](#) [PINS](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: RARE PUBLIC PROTEST BY TEACHERS, GRADUATES

Classified By: Ambassador Gary A. Grappo. Reason: 1.4 (d).

1. (SBU) In a rare protest on May 28, approximately 200 teachers and graduates from government-operated Colleges of Education (CoE) gathered in front of the Ministry of Education (MoE) and demanded to speak with the minister, Yahya bin Saud al-Salimi, about diminishing promotions for teachers and the lack of jobs for CoE graduates.

2. (SBU) Unaware of the minister's absence that day, protesters reportedly attempted to break into the Ministry. Four Royal Oman Police vehicles arrived on the scene to disperse the protesters. Contacts informed PolOff that some demonstrators told police they were protesting because they have "nothing to lose." Although the police took some protesters briefly into custody for questioning, no violent incidents were reported.

3. (C) Comment: Public protests in Oman are rare. Protests by teachers, although rare, generally generate public sympathy because of the arcane and rigid employment and promotion system for MoE teachers and College of Education graduates. Despite the minister's efforts to modernize the education system, the increasing number of graduates and diminishing job opportunities will continue to generate discontent.
GRAPPO